

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Connecticut Lodging Association is fully supportive of the Connecticut Tourism Districts and asks that they be fully funded.

Tourism is an essential economic driver for the well being of Connecticut.

The tourism districts are extremely important to hotel and lodging business and their efforts are an important underpinning of the Connecticut lodging industry's marketing.

The tourism districts tell the story of all of Connecticut's diverse culture, history and adventure. Without the districts, Connecticut's economic viability will be hurt. The lodging industry will be hurt and this industry that is already reeling from the downturn will be further threatened meaning more lay offs while raising the spector of business failures.

- **Culture and tourism activities account for over \$14 billion in Connecticut economic activity each year.**
- **170,000 jobs – 10% of the Connecticut labor force - \$9.4 billion of personal income - \$1.7 billion of state and local revenues depend on culture and tourism.**
- **Many employees whose jobs depend on the culture and tourism industry are the most vulnerable in a declining economy. Losing their jobs will increase the demand and cost for other state and local support services.**
- **Quality of life in Connecticut is rated among the best in the United States. Quality of life based on our cultural, historic and entertainment opportunities attracts people and businesses who select Connecticut above other states. Preserving our quality of life through our investment in culture and tourism is a key to rebuilding our economic future.**
- **Numerous state, regional and national studies show that, unless an investment is made to sustain the culture and tourism economy, it will decline rapidly. In the past, \$9.30 in net state and local revenue was leveraged by each \$1.00 invested.**
- **For the past 15 years, Connecticut has invested millions of dollars in the culture and tourism infrastructure. Without support many of these organizations and institutions are likely to fail and thereby negating the investments previously made.**

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